

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information	
Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
1. School/Campus:	Law/City
2. Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	LLM Bar Professional Training Course
3. Normal Duration:	1 year full-time
4. UCAS Code:	

5. **Overview and general educational aims of the course**

Nottingham Law School has an established reputation for the teaching and delivery of its academic and vocational law courses. This course has been developed to build upon the School's expertise by offering a route to gain a qualification that satisfies the requirements of the Bar Standards Board (BSB) for a Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) and, at the same time, provides an opportunity for students to gain a Masters qualification in law.

Students who enrol on the course will have a degree in law (or equivalent), and the course will offer students the opportunity to study the knowledge areas, skills and options prescribed by the BSB together with the opportunity to undertake a dissertation or a market leading Law in Practice module that seeks to develop practical legal skills within the context of legal casework and experience.

Many aspects of the course are prescribed and subject to rigorous monitoring by the BSB, and three of the assessments are centrally set and administered by the BSB. Whilst each institution which runs the BPTC must do so in accordance with the requirements of the BSB, there are differences in course structures, teaching and learning, and assessment strategies that distinguish providers of the course. Nottingham Law School is proud of its reputation for excellence in the delivery of the BPTC, and the experienced teaching team that has delivered the course (and its predecessor) since 1997.

As the course is at Masters level, the course is designed to build upon the knowledge and understanding of the law and skills that you have gained during your undergraduate legal studies, and to develop the attributes that are required to be an effective member of the Bar. You will also have the opportunity to conduct independent study and research culminating in the production of either a legal dissertation or a project for the Law in Practice module.

The aims of the LLM BPTC at Nottingham Law School are informed by the BPTC overarching course aims as follows:

- to prepare students for pupillage at the Bar
- to enable students from overseas jurisdictions to acquire the skills required for pupillage at the Bar, thereby assisting them to undertake further training or practice in their home jurisdiction

These, in turn, lead to the following specific course aims:

- to bridge the gap between the academic study of law and the practice of law

- to provide the foundation for the development of excellence in advocacy
- to inculcate a professional and ethical approach to practice as a barrister
- to prepare students for practice in a culturally diverse society
- to prepare students for the further training to be given in pupillage
- to equip students to perform competently in matters in which they are likely to encounter during pupillage
- to lay the foundation for future practice, whether in chambers or as an employed barrister, and
- to encourage students to take responsibility for their own professional development.

6. **Course outcomes**

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to demonstrate:

- Demonstrate a systematic understanding of relevant knowledge and ethical principles in law and practice; together with a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to practice at the Bar. **(M, BPTC)**
- Demonstrate expertise and originality in the application of legal knowledge in the interests of the client, together with a practical understanding of how established technical skills are used in relation to the interpretation of knowledge in the discipline **(M, BPTC)**
- Demonstrate the conceptual understanding required to collect and analyse relevant information; evaluate current developments and advanced theory in law and practice, and acquire in-depth knowledge of written material, law reports, journals and articles in applicable areas of study **(M, BPTC)**
- Use and continue to develop knowledge and understanding of the principles underpinning professional practice **(M, BPTC)**

Skills, qualities and attributes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a high level ability to be a fluent and articulate advocate able to persuade orally and in written argument using cogent legal and factual analysis; develop reasoned argument; and deploy and adapt forensic skills with respect to evidence (both written and oral) **(BPTC)**
- Critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data in order to deal with complex issues systematically, make sound judgments and demonstrate skill in identifying solutions and tackling and solving problems, and clearly communicating conclusions **(M, BPTC)**

- Undertake case analysis, research, conferences, opinion writing, drafting, negotiation and advocacy at a high level of competence with/without supervision. **(BPTC)**
- Demonstrate the qualities, skills and ethical values necessary for future employment at the Bar, with the ability to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level. **(M, BPTC)**
- Show self-direction, initiative, personal responsibility and decision making in complex situations, and the necessary independent learning abilities required to undertake appropriate further professional training and development, and continue to advance knowledge and develop new skills to a high level **(M, BPTC)**
- Apply analytical and critical reasoning and evaluate and develop critiques of methodologies relevant to professional practice at the Bar. **(M, BPTC)**
- reflect on knowledge and understanding to develop skills through continued learning and practice **(M)**

7. Teaching and learning methods

On the BPTC teaching and learning is centred on practical small group sessions supported by delivery by large group sessions, self study sessions (which emphasise the importance of independent learning) and guest speakers.

You are required to produce work or carry out preparation in advance of most sessions.

Specific sessions are dedicated to the separate knowledge and skills areas, but the course also adopts an integrated approach to the teaching and learning of the knowledge and skills areas through the vehicle of briefs which replicate the reality of practice at the Bar and allow you to practise and experience case management from beginning to end. In the case of both Civil and Criminal Litigation this will include participation in full trial hearings.

The course focuses very strongly on skills and teaching and learning throughout the course is designed to ensure the continuing reinforcement and development of these skills including in your chosen Options.

You are introduced to Legal research and Professional Ethics at the beginning of the course in order to allow you to recognise the pervasive nature of these subjects. You will undertake exercises in Legal Research relating to electronic and paper sources, research strategies and methods of updating. In the case of both Legal Research and Professional Ethics, teaching and learning will continue and be developed through issues arising in context in other modules on the course.

You will be provided with an introduction to the Dissertation or Law in Practice module including training on research techniques and methodologies, together with guidance and supervision by an allocated tutor.

<p>8. Assessment methods</p> <p>The course uses a variety of assessment methods, some of which are prescribed. Before summative assessments there are opportunities to undertake formative (practice) assessments on which you will receive feedback.</p> <p>Knowledge Subjects The main knowledge modules are each assessed by way of a central assessment that is set by the BSB, and comprise single and best answer questions for the Litigation assessments and a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. These modules include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civil Litigation, Evidence and Remedies• Criminal Litigation, Evidence and Sentencing• Professional Ethics <p>Skills Skills assessments are practical in nature, and designed to allow you to demonstrate competence against a specific criteria relevant to the skill. Typically, the assessments are set in the context of a Briefs or Instructions to Counsel.</p> <p>The following skills are assessed orally: Conference and Advocacy. The following skills are assessed in writing: Opinion Writing, Drafting and Resolution of Disputes Out of Court.</p> <p>Options Options subjects may be assessed either orally or in writing, as is appropriate to the option in question.</p> <p>Dissertation/Legal Practice The dissertation module is assessed by way of a research based written assignment of 10,000 words (maximum). You may choose the topic of research which should be informed by an aspect of law or legal practice. The chosen title will be subject to approval by the Module Leader.</p> <p>As an alternative to the dissertation, you may undertake a Law in Practice module which will be assessed by way of a project of 10,000 words (maximum) informed by practical legal work experience that you have undertaken as part of the module.</p>
<p>9. Course structure and curriculum</p> <p>The curriculum and structure of the course are substantially prescribed by the BSB.</p> <p>The BPTC at Nottingham is a full-time course that runs over one year from September to July.</p> <p>The course has been designed with the aim and purpose of providing potential barristers with an authentic experience of legal practice at the Bar, and to develop the attributes of a postgraduate.</p>

You will be introduced to the practical nature of the course by way of a Foundation Period that runs during the first two weeks. This includes introductory lectures and seminars on Legal Research and Case Analysis. The Foundation Period also introduces the skills of Drafting and Opinion Writing. Thereafter (from October to March) you will study the compulsory subjects of Civil Litigation and Evidence, Criminal Litigation, Evidence & Sentencing, Advocacy, Conference, Drafting, Opinion Writing, Resolution of Disputes Out of Court and Professional Ethics.

As befits the nature of the course you are encouraged to adopt the professional behaviours of a barrister from the outset, and you should expect a demanding workload.

The course broadly reflects the nature of legal work at the Bar in being divided into criminal and civil practice, with equal weight and emphasis being placed on both areas of practice.

Successful practice requires knowledge of certain core areas (Litigation, Evidence and Professional Ethics) and the application of fundamental skills (Advocacy, Conference, Drafting, Opinion Writing and the Resolution of Disputes Out of Court). Additionally, Legal Research and Case Analysis pervade every aspect and every stage of practice.

You will be assessed on the compulsory knowledge and skills modules during the first block of teaching that runs up to the end of the Spring term. After the Spring Break you will study a total of two Options from the range of Options available.

The course and curriculum are designed to ensure a progressive and integrated approach to the acquisition of both knowledge and skills. There is an increased emphasis, in particular, on the development of independent research skills both within the teaching and learning of your chosen Options and in your preparation for the Dissertation or Law in Practice module.

All modules are delivered and assessed at the same level, but have different credit values to reflect the difference in learning hours and the requirements of the BSB.

The allocation of credit points is set out in the table below.

The completed LLM requires the attainment of 180 credit points at level 7 (Masters level), but an alternative award of a Postgraduate Diploma can be made upon completion of 140 credits if you elect not to complete the assessment for the Dissertation or Law in Practice module. If no election is made, but you fail to complete the assessment within 9 months of the end of your course, the alternative award of a Postgraduate Diploma will automatically be made (subject to successful completion of the prescribed BPTC modules). The end of the course will be determined by reference to the date of the final Summer examination board.

All students who have successfully completed the prescribed BPTC modules will be eligible to receive a graded transcript indicating completion of the vocational stage of training for the Bar.

Students who elect not to complete the Dissertation or Law in Practice module will have the option, upon payment of a further fee, to enrol on the LLM Legal Practice (DL) which is a course that allows you to top-up the Postgraduate Diploma Bar Professional Training Course to an LLM award at a later date by distance learning.

Module	Core/Option	Level	Credits
Civil Advocacy	Core	7	12.6
Examination in Chief	Core	7	11.2
Cross Examination	Core	7	11.2
Civil Litigation, Evidence & Remedies	Core	7	14
Criminal Litigation, Evidence & Sentencing	Core	7	14
Professional Ethics	Core	7	7
Opinion Writing	Core	7	14
Drafting	Core	7	14
Conference Skills	Core	7	7
RDOC	Core	7	7
Option one	Option	7	14
Option two	Option	7	14
Total credits			140
Dissertation/Law in Practice		7	40
Total credits			180

Students may elect to receive a Postgraduate Certificate in Vocational Legal Studies where they fail to achieve 140 credits but have successfully completed 60 credits.

10. Admission to the course

Entry requirements

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the course information web page.

11. Support for learning

You will participate in an introductory programme designed to facilitate initial orientation, and induction to the course, familiarisation with relevant sources of both academic and pastoral support and awareness of University support services.

A Course Handbook is made available electronically via the Course Learning Room on the Nottingham Trent University Online Workspace (NOW). The Course Handbook details relevant staff contacts, syllabus and assessment details, and teaching and learning methods.

Your learning will be supported through the various preparatory and teaching materials made available to you.

All course information and materials, including library resources can be accessed electronically on NOW, and NOW is also used to provide updates relating to both the Course and developments in the law.

Lectures are recorded to allow you to access and view or listen to these

remotely.

Small group sessions and workshops provide on-going face to face feedback from academic tutors during the course of study. Academic and pastoral support is provided by subject tutors, a dedicated personal tutor, and the Course Leaders.

The personal tutor monitors and reviews both pastoral welfare and academic performance through termly meetings, and by accessing online data. An open door policy is in place to encourage you to contact your personal tutor where support is required.

There are many opportunities for you to undertake practice assessments and to receive feedback in order to improve future performance.

The University provides a range of student support services including Financial Support Services, Accommodation, Counselling, Disability Support, International Student Support, Mature Student Support, Language Support, Chaplains and Religious/Cultural Advisers and access to affiliated health centres. Further details can be found via the University website.

12. Graduate destinations/employability

The course is specifically designed to satisfy the requirements of the BSB for the vocational stage of training for barristers but, as an LLM, it will also provide you with advanced knowledge and skills that will be beneficial to a range of careers at graduate and post-graduate level.

The course has its own specialist careers service and has dedicated links to the University's extensive legal careers service. All of the teaching staff are qualified lawyers who are able to offer personal advice. A comprehensive careers programme has been developed to provide advice on employment opportunities, application and interview technique. Individual interviews with careers advisors are also available to students. The Law School has excellent links with practising barristers and member of the judiciary, and benefits greatly from the relationships with the profession that it has developed over many years in offering professional legal training.

NLS offers a wide range of volunteering activities that are open to all students within the Law School. The Law School also has its own award winning Legal Advice Centre that provides excellent volunteering opportunities. Further opportunities are offered with Streetlaw, NACRO, the Family Welfare Association, Citizens Advice Bureau and Victim Support.

13. Course standards and quality

A Course Review and Development Plan (CRDP) is submitted annually to the Course Committee. The latter comprises both staff and student representatives. In addition a separate, more extensive, Annual Report is submitted to the BSB. Together these reports provide information and data relating to the on-going monitoring and review of both module and course feedback from students together with external examiner reports, module leader reports and admission and progression statistics in order to identify and promote good practice and to inform relevant action points.

- The CRDP is submitted for consideration and approval to the School Academic Standards and Quality Committee and is used to inform Law School strategy and policy.
- There is on-going consultation with students regarding module and course developments through regular Course Committees. Student feedback is obtained through questionnaires at the end of each stage of the course.
- Regular review meetings take place for each module to ensure that teaching and assessment materials and methods remain up to date and relevant to the learning outcomes of the Course.
- There is an annual course review meeting.
- External examiners are regularly consulted regarding intended Course developments and full feedback is provided to them in respect of any recommendations contained in their annual reports.
- The Course is validated by and subject to annual monitoring visits from representatives of the BSB.

14. **Assessment regulations**

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

The course is also subject to separate Assessment Regulations prescribed for BPTC courses by the BSB. These supersede the University Common Assessment Regulations to the extent that these are inconsistent with them.

There is a compulsory attendance requirement which is prescribed by the BSB, which is strictly and rigorously monitored.

15. **Additional Information**

Collaborative partner(s):

Course referenced to national QAA

Benchmark Statements:

Course recognised by:

Bar Standards Board

Accreditation until 2016 with extension pending the entry into force of the provisions of the Future Bar Training.

Date this course specification approved:

Any additional information: